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The Very Chiefest Issue

ELECTION day is drawing very near. The presidential election is of momentous interest this year. The man who will be at the helm this year will meet stormier and more confused seas than any president has met for half a century. There will be troubles from both without and within, which will try the brain and the nerve of the president so fiercely that unless he is of iron fibre he will fail. And the troubles from within are liable to be the more severe.

Our labor troubles are acute and if our land is left open for the inflow without restriction of foreign goods and the hordes from southern and eastern Europe, we shall have a state of affairs almost or quite as trying as would be a civil or foreign war.

Indeed a war calls up the patriotism of a people. A mighty trade and labor depression, accompanied with a vast inflow of cheap foreign goods and cheap laborers to enter at once into competition with our own laboring forces, would engender more ill feelings and a greater desire for vengeance than could a war.

A little war submarine the other day appeared off the New England coast and sunk two or three foreign ships.

The incident was enough to smash stocks and make a half panic in the east lest trade be interrupted. What then will happen when some morning the news comes that a truce has been called between the nations at war beyond the sea?

It will come to this country as the hurried order to an engineer down in the engine room of a ship to "stop and back at full speed" does. And as then the ship will tremble through all its length and breadth.

Well, it might happen that the electoral vote of Utah may be the deciding one in the election of president this year.

Republicans should keep this in mind. There are many important questions under consideration this year, but the election of president is the overmastering one, and every vote should count, for this is the most important year, and more momentous questions are bearing upon the result at the polls than the people have been tried with before for quite half a century.

Disquieting Apprehension

AGIFTED local merchant was asked yesterday how business was and what the outlook for future business looked. He replied, in substance, as follows:

"Artificial conditions are giving business a feverish, artificial, intermittent pace now, the uncertainty of the immediate future, makes anything like steadiness of thought impossible.

"It is like riding over a bridge that is half undermined by a flood and the passenger is wondering whether the bridge will stand until the train gets over or not.

"There is a double uncertainty. One is, how long will the war last? The other, what will we have to face when it closes?

"It is understood that England has a three years' copper supply already on hand. She has forbidden her colonies to export grain and doubt-

less has issued the same order to India and Egypt to store all their cotton. She has about all the merchant ships that are engaged; with the closing of the war she will rely upon her trade to keep her interest paid and for credit to borrow more money.

"She will borrow all the surplus money that has come to us through the sale of war material and her struggle will be to absolutely dominate ocean commerce, and to deliver her products in outside countries on such terms as those countries cannot compete against. And the chiefest of all those countries is our own.

"She knows the labor conditions in our country, she knows that when the war closes her own laborers will work for what they can get, that they will be obliged to in order to live.

"She counts on those facts to enable her to borrow money here, believing that men and companies with a surplus of money will prefer loaning it to starting new enterprises under present labor revision ideas. It will be all the more trying if thousands of those stranded by the war come here to enter into direct competition with our union labor.

"Then while it is the idea of the Allies to crush Germany utterly and eliminate her from trade calculations for twenty-five years at least, they will not succeed. Her territory is all intact, and to conquer her utterly is a bigger contract than all concerned can carry out.

"The war will hardly cease before German merchant ships will resume their old routes and German factories will again supply those ships with every manufactured product that the outside world needs.

"France will quickly be ready to send away her products, for there is no way that any of those countries can begin to recuperate, except through foreign trade! No country from which they expect to realize or have as much through trade as from our own.

"We have no merchant marine, and no protection against the flood of goods of all kinds that will pour in upon us.

"It is generally understood that were the war to close tomorrow, business would fall as flat in our country as did stocks the morning after it was known that a German submarine had sunk two or three English merchant ships off the New England coast.

"How would it be with us six months or a year after the close of that war?

"Our country is not unlike a farmer who has a great field of wheat just ripening, but no fence of any description around it, while just over a low hill a mighty herd of cattle are lowing with hunger, and the question is, will that farmer ever be able to harvest and save his crop?"

There Is No Hope From Them

THE other day when the news came that the German war submarine had sunk three or four foreign ships off the New England coast, next morning the New York market went to pieces, and has not yet fully recovered. When asked the reason, the answer came back that it was through

fear that our ocean commerce was liable to be blockaded.

The German submarine was no menace to American ships. Why the anxiety?

Then came back the humiliating answer: "Why, the United States has no ships, we have to depend upon English ships to carry away what we have to send, and to bring to us what we buy abroad."

It is more than two years since the war burst in its fury upon Europe. It came so suddenly that our eastern ports have many interned German merchant ships. The need of an American merchant marine was by the war made most vividly apparent.

President Wilson admitted recently our helplessness in that respect.

In full evidence was the fact that England and Germany have both grown rich through their shipping during the past thirty years. And the further fact has been just as apparent that the chiefest factor in the case of both those countries has been the carrying trade to and from the United States. One would have thought that the president and every member of congress would at once have asked: "How has this been possible?" and would at once have moved to abate the wrong that our country had so long suffered.

But when the president and his party friends were informed that England had depended upon subsidies and Germany upon bounties, to keep their ships on the sea, that was enough. Neither bounties nor subsidies were approved of in the confederate constitution.

The president evolved a plan to purchase or build a few ships and run them to a few foreign ports and to make up the deficit they would surely entail by drawing it from the treasury which the people through taxes have to keep filled. Finally just before congress adjourned this year, such a bill was pushed through. This is a presidential year, except for that there would have been no bill to re-establish an American merchant marine.

We are justified in that assertion, because of the thoughts and words of that party in the past and because of the nature of the bill itself.

It carries no inducement to try for a closer walk with foreign powers, no promise that the ships will be run for a single month after England and Germany shall be able to resume their carrying of foreign commerce.

There is no hint in it that the framers had the least conception of what a great nation's foreign commerce should include. The bill is but an afterbirth of a thought that first took form on a cotton field, and which, reduced to words, was: "Ships are like camels, mere beasts of burden. Let them bring in what they please, and take away our cotton.

"We have a monopoly in our cotton, which cannot be broken. Why should we care for other industries?"

"We care for no intimate, close business relations with any foreign power; we are not interested in the affairs of outside nations and care not for the opportunities which those countries